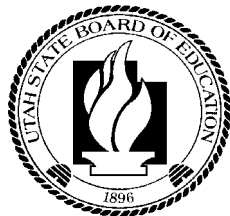


**THE REPORT OF THE
ACCREDITATION VISITING TEAM**

**Milford High School
62 North 300 West
Milford, Utah 84751**

April 15, 2004



Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Milford High School
62 North 300 West
Milford, Utah 84751**

April 15, 2004

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**Patrick Ogden
Interim State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 15, 2004, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Milford High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal John C. Nielsen is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Milford High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Milford High School.

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Interim State Superintendent
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**Board of Regents Appointments*

10/30/03

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Laird Jenkins.....	Program Administrator
Tracy Davis	Program Administrator
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Becky Bartlett	Secretary/Receptionist
Terry Barton.....	Computer Technician
Brent Judd	Tri-County Vocational Director

MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

John Nielsen..... Principal

Counseling

Rick Rose..... Counselor

Alison Thacker..... Counselor

Faculty

Renaë Aschoff
Jeff Brough
Sandra Edwards
Robert Greider

Brian Hollingshead
Gary Jensen
Robert Langston
Holly Robison

Rick Rose
Mike Swanson
Andy Swapp
Alison Thacker

Support Staff

Claude Barnes
Tracy Bealer
Haylee Bebee
Lauri Bebee
Cullen Carter
Steve Coleman
Aaron Cox

Nanette Davis
Brent Hardy
Wayne Hardy
Roger Hatch
DeAnn Holm
Mary Jo Holm
Donald Livingston

Gina Mayer
Karen Nelson
Ruth Smith
Kathy Toro
Holly Williams

MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The Community of Milford High School will provide students with a safe and diverse learning environment and educational programs that enable them to become caring, responsible citizens.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

The Community of Milford High School believes...

- o in and values the American way of life.
- o disciplined, hardworking students will become responsible, productive adults.
- o in providing our students with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to succeed in post-secondary pursuits.
- o that we make a positive difference in the lives of students.
- o the responsibility for student education is shared between parents, teachers, students and community.
- o a variety of opportunities for student participation is necessary.
- o in providing the means for students to achieve emotional and ethical well being.
- o in a safe and appealing learning environment.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Bob O'Connor, Treasure Mountain Middle School, Park City School District,
Visiting Team Chairperson

Barry Walker, South Summit Middle School, South Summit School District

Tim Lowe, Dixie High School, Washington County School District

REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM

MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Milford High School has roots going back as far as 1883. Classes were taught in a hotel until student enrollment (35-40 students) forced the town to build a schoolhouse. The townspeople built a frame schoolhouse that was used for 20 years. In 1914 a new school district was formed. A bond was passed to build a new high school. The current school was built on the same site as the older school, and was completed in 1995.

Milford High School is a 7-12th grade school. It is a two-story building and offers a variety of solid and elective courses. It is a 1A school with 174 students. The average grade size is 28 students. The majority of students are Caucasian, with several Asian, Hispanic, and Indian students.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

There was no written indication of analysis of the profile done by the school. The community's major income sources are the railroad and farming. The majority of teachers have been at the school for less than five years. The school has seven 50-minute periods each day (except Friday, which is shortened).

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

Future modifications to the school profile could include more information about community makeup (income, jobs, etc.), community use of the school, and community interests, as well as more student background information.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Examine the relationship between agriculture and the railroad in the community.
- Explore the effect of community growth or stagnation on education.
- Consider changes in demographics and any effects these changes have.
- Consider turnover of teachers and its effect on student learning.
- Research the relationship between income and education.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of the students?*

The people of Milford and the school have done a good job of engaging in a collaborative self-study process. They have involved a large percentage of parent and community shareholders. They have a student as part of their leadership team, but he was unavailable when the Visiting Team met with the school. It is important to have students involved in this process, and the school has at least one student on each committee.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The self-study process and resulting booklet show that the school engaged in a quality self-study process. There are a number of areas where the school has done some excellent things as a result of this process, but these items are not in the self-study booklet. Also, some limitations that have been overlooked that may be worth addressing in the future. For example, the self-study could show a more complete picture of the school by including items that were presented during the Visiting Team's visit.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Milford High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. **Responsible Citizen:**
 - o Demonstrates individual responsibility
 - o Practices a healthy lifestyle
 - o Understands and promotes the democratic principles of freedom, justice, and equality
2. **Effective Communicator:**
 - o Uses appropriate methods to communicate
 - o Responds appropriately to communication
 - o Utilizes good writing skills
 - o Has developed a high standard of literacy
3. **Lifelong Learner:**
 - o Initiates their own learning

- o Demonstrates positive learning habits
- o Has a plan for post-secondary pursuits
- o Reads well

4. Complex Thinker

- o Demonstrates a variety of thinking processes
- o Applies thinking skills strategically
- o Integrates new information with existing knowledge and experience

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The school formulated its mission statement by first establishing a committee of stakeholders to brainstorm what they believed about student learning. Committee members included a teacher, secretary, school board member, student body member, and custodian.

The committee used the brainstorming session to create a general set of beliefs about student learning. These belief statements were then utilized by the entire faculty and committee to create a mission statement for the school. Following revision and corrections, the committee and staff approved the mission statement.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The stakeholders committee established the belief statements as the first step in the school improvement process. They met to brainstorm what they believed about student learning. Their list of beliefs was recorded and condensed into statements reflecting each belief. The staff and Leadership Committee (Community Council) approved the set of beliefs.

The belief statements reflect a genuine concern for student success in their academic pursuits, vocational choices, and roles as citizens.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

Using the Utah Life Skills as a guideline, the stakeholders committee and staff established the DRSLs, with their accompanying indicators, to match their belief and mission statements. Each DRSL was analyzed by the staff to determine whether it could be implemented throughout the school and supported by the entire staff.

Interviews with staff members indicated that the DRSLs are well accepted by the staff and are being utilized in lesson planning and instruction.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

As part of the school's action plan, the staff is emphasizing the incorporation of the Core Curriculum in every class. They have developed four action steps to ensure that this happens. Their evidence for accomplishing each step consists of anecdotal observations by the principal. It is recommended that the school also review CRT scores to see what effect the steps are having on improving student achievement. A written goal for student improvement would be an appropriate addition to the school's action plan.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

The DRSLs are being used as a guide in some classes for lesson planning. The school has made a good effort to teach skills and strategies that will help students reach the "indicators" outlined as part of the DRSLs during its Educational Focus, a 12-minute period each day used to "focus" on particular topic.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

The staff members met over several faculty meetings to discuss how their teaching could be improved. They brainstormed and shared ideas on different types of learning experiences, such as small group work, oral presentations by students, greater use of technology (PowerPoint presentations), etc.

In addition, they have, on a limited basis, done some team teaching and peer evaluation with feedback for each other on ways to improve their teaching and add variety to their lessons.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The staff members, through their self-evaluations, peer evaluations, and parent evaluations of classroom teaching, recognized that lecture-type instruction was being overused in the school. Teachers are once again sharing ideas and visiting each other's classrooms to help increase the use of hands-on activities, partner share, and other instructional strategies in every classroom.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

The staff is commended for its efforts to identify students and offer additional instructional opportunities. The staff members have focused on writing, reading, and math during their educational focus time. They have also identified struggling students in math, and have a mandatory after-school remedial program these students.

Teachers have indicated that they are available to help students after school. On Friday they have early-out day, and rather than scheduling planning time (since these departments are usually one or two people only), they use this extra time to provide individual help for struggling students.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The staff is using assessments already in place such, as the CRTs and ACT, to evaluate student progress. In addition, they are adding more performance-based assessments in their classrooms (see the next question).

Although this is not included in the SIP booklet, the staff is beginning to use testing data to make educational decisions. The remedial math program is an example of one thing they are doing with assessment data. At this time they are also analyzing the low-performing students and disaggregating data to identify which students are underachievers. The school has identified a major concern with its low-income students, and they are researching what programs might best serve these students' needs.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

The staff is beginning to use more oral presentations, PowerPoint presentations, and portfolio assessments in an effort to have students improve their communication skills, which is in line with the school's "Effective Communicator" DRSL. The staff feels that these measurements are offering more valid assessment than a paper-and-pencil test, or even an essay test.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

The staff members do recognize the different needs of individual students, and are giving assessment options to students (i.e., the chance to choose an essay over an oral presentation or a portfolio over a paper-and-pencil test).

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

As a whole, the staff expressed appreciation for Principal Nielsen's efforts to improve the academic stature of the school. They were unanimous in saying that things had improved under his three years of leadership. The addition of the Educational Focus, remedial math, and the study of assessment data have all had a positive effect on academics.

One area of concern that the principal may want to address is a school-wide attendance policy. Concern was expressed that it was left up to individual teachers to make up their own attendance policy, which could be confusing to students and parents. A school-wide plan dealing with attendance may be a more effective deterrent to truancy.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

In this small school, teachers have personal contact on a daily basis with all of their students, giving them great insight into the individual needs of the students. This is coupled with the efforts of the principal (who provides CRT and SAT data), and the counselor (who also provides grading information to the teachers that helps them make more informed decisions).

As part of their SIP process, the school utilized the NSSE standards to help identify needed areas of improvement.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The school uses CRTs, the ACT, and their own grade reports to analyze their instructional effectiveness. As has been stated, they use this information in making decisions about student needs. An example is the math remediation program, which is a direct result of assessing the school's latest math scores.

The school uses the Utah Comprehensive Guidance program as a part of its effort to provide students with an appropriate curriculum to meet their needs.

Teachers indicated that the principal visits with them personally about CRT and ACT assessments, and works to help them develop improvement plans where needed.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

As stated, the teachers are unanimous in their support for the academic efforts of the principal.

The decision to separate the seventh grade from the rest of the school was supported by the staff and viewed as a positive effort to help student discipline.

Two areas of concern that might be addressed by the leadership are a school-wide attendance policy (as previously mentioned), as well as a school policy addressing steps for dealing with student discipline. For example, what steps are taken before a student is suspended, and what kinds of behavior would necessitate immediate suspension? There seemed to be some confusion on the staff members' part as to what a student had to do to be suspended, and the consistency with which discipline is applied.

Survey data indicated that the way students treated each other, as well as alcohol/tobacco problems, were a concern of students, teachers, and parents. Should these concerns continue, the staff will want to address them in a future action plan.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The school makes good use of its resources. It has fully functioning computer labs, and would like to add a writing lab when funds are available. It utilizes online and EDNET courses, and will shortly have courses offered via EDNET from Beaver High School, giving students a greater choice when making up their schedule.

The staff members have allocated time wisely in an effort to address the Core Curriculum and the DRSLs. The implementation of the Educational Focus program was viewed as a very positive change that didn't take extra time out of their day.

Friday afternoons are being used to benefit students who need extra help. The community and staff also viewed this as a positive use of time. As pointed out by one teacher, the students who are gone on Fridays (students involved in school activities) are the students that the data show performing better. This gives the teachers time to work with the low-achieving students one on one or in small groups.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school has established a “Leadership Committee” that includes parents, teachers, and the local mayor. The committee members work closely to improve the academic environment of the school and community. In their small community they have established a curfew rule, under which the local food marts, etc., cannot sell items to students during school hours. This is a collaborative effort to keep students in school where they belong.

The Leadership Committee has worked closely with the entire staff in developing the School Improvement Plan.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The staff has been making efforts to work together more closely. Its members discuss and brainstorm new teaching strategies in their faculty meetings, and have been observing each other teach and offering suggestions for improvement.

A major concern, of course, is time. Most of the staff members have two or three other assignments besides their teaching. Several have coaching responsibilities, coupled with advisor duties in one or more areas. The staff members are to be commended for the work they do, and their efforts to help each other improve their teaching while doing a multitude of things to improve the lives of their students.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The school involves the community in many school activities, such as M-Day. This is a community-wide cleanup by the different grade levels, which is judged by community members. This has made it easier to ask parents to come in and help on school improvement committees. The Visiting Team was very impressed that parents had been invited and had come into the school to observe teaching

and offer suggestions and comments to the teachers. This was a courageous effort on the school's part.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The staff has received training on "Love and Logic" which correlates with their "Responsible Citizen" DRSL. No other professional development programs were identified in the SIP or through teacher interviews.

The teachers have opportunities for college courses through EDNET. At the current time there are no stipends or incentives offered by the district or school for continued education, other than advancement on the salary schedule.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The staff members have been working together to improve their instruction and teaching strategies. Teacher interviews revealed a concern for improvement and a desire to do the very best for their students. Teachers are using faculty meetings for more than scheduling as they discuss and brainstorm together ways to improve teaching.

The principal has provided continued leadership in directing the staff's focus towards academic achievement. Despite their many duties, the staff members have responded to his leadership and are excited about the academic progress they are making. The Visiting Team commends both the principal and the staff for their positive attitude and efforts in helping Milford High students achieve greater academic success.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met. However, Milford High School does have the services or supervision of a licensed librarian.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The school improvement plan and action plan were developed with input from teachers, staff, and community members. The plans addressed areas for growth and improvement.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The school appears to have complete commitment to the action plan. Staff members are aware of their roles, and actively participate in the school improvement process. There are several programs and activities not addressed in the improvement plan that are addressing the goals of the action plan.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

The school leadership has identified areas of focus to measure the success and progress of the action plan. They are open to feedback and are willing to make adjustments to the action plan in an effort to reach the school improvement plan goals.

CHAPTER 6: COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the staff, parents, students, and administration for their efforts in using the National Study of School Evaluation tool to obtain opinions and data about Milford High School. It is evident that there was considerable effort made to provide opportunities for parents and students to provide input. This effort needs to continue as Milford High School moves forward with its school improvement plan.
- The staff is to be commended for maintaining a professional attitude and directed focus, given the number of classes and grade levels and the variety of students that they teach on a daily basis. Teachers and administrators have established and maintained a positive school culture and climate. New faculty members have been assimilated into the school improvement goals and accreditation process. The

school administrator and leadership team deserve credit for this collaborative effort.

- The Visiting Team commends the staff and administration, along with an involved and supportive community, for supporting and implementing programs that involve a collaborative effort and support from all stakeholders. The remedial math program is just one example.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Milford High School identify and use authentic assessment data that will accurately assess student achievement of the school's current desired results for student learning. Assessment data will also play an important role in the continued development of DRSLs and subject area action plans for improving student achievement.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Milford High School examine the scope of its DRSLs so that they encompass, identify, reinforce, and measure the true level of learning that is occurring at the school. Development and implementation of a method for assessing reading and comprehension skills will help increase the understanding and purpose of the school's goals and provide evidence of overall student achievement.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Milford High School continue its efforts in involving parents and the community with the development and implementation of its school improvement plan. With some of the unique challenges facing Milford High School, it is imperative that the level of community support and involvement remain consistent for continued growth and student achievement.